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GERMAN REUNIFICATION, A SOVIET OPPORTUNITY

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHARLES G. STEVENS

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is proposed by the Soviets and exploited to their advantage. It considers how such a scenario might be orchestrated to meet current and future needs in the Soviet Union for economic development assistance, access to western technology and most importantly as a guarantee for the nation's security. Finally, it explores the lack of preparedness on the part of the United States to deal with such a Soviet initiative. The scenario details a series of events which, if they occurred, could result in major changes in the world balance of power.

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GERMAN REUNIFICATION, A SOVIET OPPORTUNITY

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Charles G. Stevens

Dr. Samuel J. Newland
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
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ABSTRACT

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The inter-German border (IGB) has been the focus of consistent NATO/Warsaw Pact confrontation and the German question, the question of German reunification, has been at the root of East/West relations in Europe since the end of World War II. There is a consensus that no solution to the challenge of East/West confrontation exists which does not include resolution of the German question. This study uses the medium of a fictional state memorandum from General Secretary Gorbachev to Foreign Minister Shevardnadze laying out a scenario in which resolution of the problem of the separate Germanies is proposed by the Soviets and exploited to their advantage. It considers how such a scenario might be orchestrated to meet current and future needs in the Soviet Union for economic development assistance, access to western technology and most importantly as a guarantee for the nation's security. Finally, it explores the lack of preparedness on the part of the United States to deal with such a Soviet initiative. The scenario details a series of events which, if they occurred, could result in major changes in the world balance of power.

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GERMAN REUNIFICATION, A SOVIET OPPORTUNITY

INTRODUCTION

The original intent of the research for this paper was to learn about, compare, contrast and project into the future both East and West views on the question of German reunification, die Deutsche Frage, which has been at the center of European politics since the end of World War II. In the course of the research it became clear that the key to German unity is held by the Soviet Union more than any other nation. It was also apparent that throughout NATO nearly everyone has given the issue short shrift and failed to face it directly, assuming an automatic Russian "nyet" to any reunification proposal. The result is a vacuum in western policy which leaves an opening for Soviet action. I began to wonder how significant this opening might be and whether the Soviets might be able to use it to their advantage. During the time the research was ongoing, events in Germany made the question even more pertinent. There appears to in fact be an opening which might be exploited by the Soviets, especially under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. The fact that the concept has been considered in the USSR was evidenced when a Soviet officer, during a recent visit to the U.S. Army War College, was questioned about whether or not relations among European nations would ever improve sufficiently to allow German reunification. His response indicated that this was up to the German people and, eventually, not only probable, but necessary. What follows is a fictional state memorandum from General Secretary Gorbachev to Foreign Minister

Schevardnadze presenting a scenario in which German reunification might be orchestrated to significant Soviet advantage. We, as a nation, must be alert to the lack of a coherent western policy on the German question, consider the national strategy implications which might result from a Soviet initiative on the issue and be prepared to deal with them. Failure to do so could result in a change in the global balance of power with the Soviets as the prime mover, pressing for their own desired outcome.

The Kremlin

15 March 1989

SUBJECT: German Reunification

MEMORANDUM FOR: Komrade Foreign Minister Schevardnadze:

As we move our nation forward toward an even greater position in the leadership of this world, it is my responsibility to investigate and pursue every avenue which might further our cause. As you are well aware, I have recognized the need for internal reforms, social and economic. We have begun to implement perestroika and the new openness is taking hold. There are signs in our society which, while disturbing to many in the old guard, represent positive signs to me and indicate that our people are capable of the social changes which will make us leaders in the twenty-first century. As we have discussed before, the key to making perestroika successful is to develop an economy which will support the improved lifestyle and social status intended by the movement.

Honest analysis of our current economic status makes evident the need for immediate reform with a long range plan for economic growth and stability. The largest single component of the present economic structure is given to support of our military power base. The mandate to improve the national standard of living is becoming increasingly clear. We must find innovative yet realistic ways to diminish the need to dedicate such a significant percentage of our national resources to defense and turn them toward general economic develop-

ment. This is only feasible, however, if we can do so while ensuring without question the continued security of our Motherland.

There are many facets which must be taken into consideration to include economics, the relative strengths of NATO and our own Warsaw Pact forces, future force reduction talks and many others. As I continue to search for initiatives to secure our future I am forced to revisit old ideas and continually seek new ones. Evaluation of current circumstances and realistic appraisal of the urgency of our needs combine with an eye to the future and cause me to think the unthinkable, consider options which only a short time ago would have been totally inconceivable. As a result, I have become intrigued with the possibility of using die Deutsche Frage (The German Question), the question of German reunification, as a process to aid in achieving our long range goals. I will outline here a number of points for your consideration. You are to take this concept under advisement and provide me your evaluation of its potential for the good of the country.

Note that there are no preconceived limitations on this exercise save one. When we consider the question of German reunification, the only acceptable concept is that of joining the two territories we now know as the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). While there are numerous other lands which have historic connection to a unified Germany, there are three major points which preclude their inclusion. First, I want no reference in this process to the greater nation of all Germanic peoples as envisaged by Adolph Hitler. The memories of that concept are too real and can only hinder the possibilities inherent in this process.

Second, we will respect Austrian neutrality. You will see later how this fits my proposed scenario. Last and most importantly, much of the territory which was historically German now belongs to our own Warsaw Pact allies. The alliance is indispensable to the long range security of Mother Russia. We will not press for return of any lands from our allies to a reunified Germany. Your evaluation will be limited to potential union of the FRG and the GDR.

BACKGROUND

History is replete with examples of efforts for unification in the area we know as Germany. The concept of a unified state has been² embedded in the German psyche since the time of the Holy Roman Empire. Our victory in the Great Patriotic War resulted in division of Germany³ as agreed in the Yalta Conference of 1945. We were able to use this division to our advantage in reshaping the boundaries of post-war⁴ Europe. In addition, the Potsdam agreements on final disposition of Germany have served us well; in response to the western allies'⁵ failure to meet agreed provisions we were able to extend our influence past the states bordering us on the west into the heart of what was "The Fatherland" itself.

Reconstruction of Germany, the advent of the Cold War and the formation of opposing alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, however, resulted in a division which appeared to grow more and more permanent. In the years immediately after the war, tensions between East and West increased significantly, drawing what are now the GDR and FRG ever more strongly into their respective camps. Under Conrad Adenauer the

Laender of the French, British and American sectors were drawn not only closer together, but consistently under greater and greater American influence. Although total reunification was allegedly supported by the West, efforts made by Stalin to accomplish just that were terminated due to unacceptable conditions the West demanded be appended to the original offer.⁶ When the FRG was formally established and a separate currency put in place in 1948, we were forced to make similar moves in the Eastern sector or fall immediately behind in the Cold War.⁷ As tensions continued to increase, the Germanies became central, symbolic of the determination of both sides to be victorious. For the West, allied support of Berlin in 1949 and 1961 along with West Germany's present place as a pillar of NATO defenses are examples. For us, integration of the GDR into the Warsaw Pact defensive alliance and our continued mutual support of each others' goals tell our story. As the two Germanies were drawn more strongly into separate camps their division looked to be irresolvable.

A LIVING CONCEPT

One would think that, given the differences between East and West and the closeness of the Germanies to their allies, the concept of separate nations would be accepted as a fait accompli. This is not the case, however, and we may be able to turn it to our advantage. Separation of the Germanies, die Deutsche Frage, has been at the heart of European politics since the end of the Great Patriotic War and remains so today.

In the face of East/West confrontations during the early stages of the Cold War the German question received continuous attention. As

the world raised itself from its own ashes in 1945, reunification became a cornerstone of western policy. In 1954 it became a fixture in the FRG when a requirement for the Bundesrepublik to continually pursue reunification as national policy was written into the Basic Law, the Federal Republic's constitution. Although very much alive, the concept lay somewhat dormant for the next fifteen years until it received new emphasis under the chancellorship of Willy Brandt. In 1969 his initiation of the policy of Ostpolitik, a new openness on the part of West Germany toward members of our Eastern Block, began a trend which has continued through to the present. Even though this was a Social Democratic Party (SPD) partisan initiative, it continues today despite control of the Federal Republic's government by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU).

Political contacts are increasing while economic interdependence and cultural interaction continue to grow. Examples include the fact that even in the face of its fall from power the SPD maintains independent political liaison with the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in East Germany, the high level of interest in arranging a state visit by GDR President Honecker to the FRG in the mid-1980s despite East/West confrontation over deployment of Pershing II missiles, and the very fact that the visit did occur in 1987. Most recently, Chancellor Kohl discussed the German question with me during his October 1988 visit to Moscow. While I gave him no encouragement whatsoever, it was apparent from his comments afterward that he considered the topic far from closed. This is apparently the position of NATO as well. In an October 18, 1988 talk before the Atlantic Council of the United

States, Sir John Killick, former ambassador to us from Great Britain stated:

What we have always wanted to achieve in Europe--and this has been the objective in the Atlantic Alliance all through--it is not just a military organization--is what I would call a modus vivendi in Europe, in a sense truly living together through peace.

The Harmel Report, whose 20th anniversary was celebrated last year, said the ultimate political purpose of the Alliance is to achieve a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe accompanied by appropriate security guarantees. It went on to say that no final and stable settlement in Europe is possible without the solution of the German question, which lies at the heart of present tensions. Western politicians have always said there can be no stability in Europe with the German people divided against their will.

And Harmel went on to say, "the allies will examine and review suitable policies designed to achieve a just and stable order in Europe, to overcome the division of Germany, and to foster European security."

This will be part of the process of active and constant preparation for the time when fruitful discussion of these complex questions may be possible bilaterally or multilaterally between Eastern and Western nations. (12)

So, the question is still very much alive. But, as Ambassador Killick stated later in his speech, NATO has failed to recognize this reality with a vision of the long range Europe they would like to see. They do not know and have not articulated their own interests nor have they even begun to consider our legitimate Eastern Block interests in the area. ¹³ Here is a western policy void, an opportunity for us to establish our leadership in this arena, to complete a long range vision of how to answer die Deutsche Frage to our own advantage and begin its resolution before the West is fully aware of our desired end. Taking advantage of this political opening by incorporating into our actions the element of surprise may serve us well, so we must be the first to investigate the possibilities. My preliminary vision follows. I want your thoughts and recommendations.

CURRENT SITUATION

In pursuing this concept it may help to review the circumstances which prompted this memorandum. To begin with, we must take a realistic look at ourselves. We are a nation made strong by our physical size, vast resources and in particular the strength of our military forces. These are all tremendous assets but may not continue to serve us so well unless we adapt their use to gain maximum benefit in the future. We must maintain our ability to influence global affairs while maintaining our own security at home. The threat of nuclear use in a general warfare scenario makes that option wholly unacceptable. Even if we won, what would be left to us? Our recent experience in Afghanistan demonstrates, as the Americans found out in Viet Nam, the costs associated with long term low intensity conflict. The costs are so great that we must use this option very selectively and only when we can be guaranteed of its benefits. Other military options along the spectrum of conflict between these two also bring with them costs which our economy will not easily support.

As a result, I see the next "war" as an economic battle, one in which we are already far behind. For decades our economy has been directed inwardly and based largely on production of the hardware necessary to equip the military and guarantee our security. Here we have succeeded. In order to compete in the coming "war", however, we must find a way to redirect our economic process to make us competitive in the global economy. There is a limited market for military materiel outside our borders and we need to develop the ability to better meet the needs and desires of our people to improve

their standard of living. To accomplish these goals it is essential that we turn a significant portion of our military-driven production to other uses and begin a serious program of economic development.

There is, however, a serious caveat which we must never forget. Our primary goal is security of the homeland. Without this, all other concerns are inconsequential. Therefore, there must be a means which will allow us to turn "military rubles" to other uses yet safeguard the nation. I have already seized the initiative by proposing a reduction of 500,000 military personnel in Europe. This we can afford from current strengths without loss of the capability to secure our borders. Further actions to reduce military strengths must include negotiations for western cutbacks and be matched by coordinated political actions which result in a wholly secure nation thereby freeing military resources to be applied to general economic development. I realize that this will be a long process requiring strategic planning and much effort on your part, but what is twenty years in the life of our nation? How, you ask, does this fit in with the German question? Allow me to build a scenario that could meet our needs, beginning with the situation in the Federal Republic.

THE CONCEPT

West Germany has become a keystone of NATO, growing from its initial membership in 1954 to a role as the most important European member of the alliance. If the FRG were to depart for any reason, the entire organization may well collapse. While her allegiance to the West has always been strong, there are signs of chinks in the NATO

armor, such as disagreement over burdensharing, environmental concerns and defense weariness, which might be exploited to our benefit. Given the right circumstances, planning and timing on our part, departure of the Bundesrepublik from the alliance and possibly even neutralization might be achieved.

To begin with, the perception of the threat we pose to the West has changed almost unbelievably in the last three years, particularly in the Federal Republic. Recent polls in the FRG show that my¹⁴ personal popularity exceeds that of any leader in the West. Similar polls show that the West German populace feels that I, and therefore¹⁵ our nation, can be trusted and that we are not likely to provoke war. This is certainly true as they perceive war. With decreased perception of the threat facing any nation there comes a natural tendency to believe that military expenditures can be better used elsewhere. (I admit this has had some impact on my recent initiative to reduce our forces by 500,000.) Although direct defense expenditures in the Federal Republic constitute a relatively small percentage of their gross national product, there is pressure building to reduce them even further.

We should note here that defense costs take on many faces, not only direct expenditures, all of which impact in one way or another on the will of the population to support the military. Of major importance in West Germany are basing rights and maneuver damage. West Germany houses the preponderance of NATO forces and there is evidence of very real consternation among her people about basing. The recent successful court injunction to prevent stationing of¹⁶ American Apache helicopters in Wiesbaden is a prime example. In

addition, Germans are quickly tiring of the noise, damage and loss of life resulting from continuous low-level fighter aircraft training flights as shown by the furor following the August 28, 1988 crash of the Italian demonstration team at Ramstein Air Base and the more recent crash of a U.S. Air Force A-10 at Remscheid. Finally, routine maneuver damage and the impact of Army training on the environment are continually growing issues. The point is that, as dissatisfaction with things military continues to grow, we may well find ways to use it to our advantage.

Polls in West Germany over the last ten years show positive ratings for membership in NATO between 80 and 90 percent but they denote a steady decrease in support. Support for the presence of U.S. troops in the Federal Republic, however, has experienced a decrease from the 76 percent shown in a 1985 EMNID poll to under 40 percent in a summer 1988 poll conducted for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and der Stern. As my leadership continues to take hold and we make progress with our own internal policies, I anticipate that we will be perceived as more stable and trust in us will continue to grow. The result should be a continuing decrease in West German perception of us as a threat to their security. With no great threat at hand the trend in support for American troops may well continue and acceptance of a strong multi-national military force with its associated problems as described above will grow more difficult. Certainly it will bring the great cost in actual federal outlay, lost economic opportunity and ancillary damage into question and make it a much greater burden to bear.

What is the point of all this? Simply that if the outside environment is right and the internal trends described above continue to grow, the FRG might be ripe for a change in political standing, possibly even an exit from NATO. There are public opinion surveys which indicate that reunification might be a key element, a catalyst if you will, in promoting that change. In numerous opinion polls the West German population has demonstrated increasing willingness to accept neutrality as a condition to achieve reunification. A neutral German nation outside NATO might be of benefit to us in many ways, even to the point where it would be worthwhile to absorb the political costs of supporting such a move. I will review possible benefits along with others that will become evident later.

What conditions might prompt such an action by the FRG? To begin with, the multi-faceted costs of the military forces present in the country are causing a shift in popular opinion on the continued willingness to bear this burden as I discussed above. We will see what the future brings in terms of their willingness to support specifically American troops on their soil. But that is only a minor factor. The real essence of the matter has to do with the will of Americans to continue to pay indefinitely for forward deployment of their forces in West Germany.

As you know only too well, the American democracy with its economic and military might is our primary adversary. Much of the military buildup we have accomplished in the last twenty-five years has been in response to their force structure. With ever-increasing frequency, the question of draw-down of America's forward deployed forces arises in their Congress and is raised by numerous economic

analysts. In the last eight years the United States has become the largest debtor nation in the world with a net international debt estimated to exceed \$1 trillion before it levels off.²³ The result is a national debt which has become the number one priority problem for the American people. To help balance the budget, Congress foolishly passed the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act placing the Defense Department among the first activities to absorb the cost of failing to do so. They have attacked their own strength.

Under the spectre of this debt, Americans are looking to policy changes which will help reduce expenditures. I will be only too glad to help them so long as we retain the initiative. As we pursue glasnost and conventional arms reduction treaties, we can concentrate our efforts on achieving withdrawal of their forward deployed European forces. The growing anti-military mood in West Germany and the American desire to reduce military costs will aid us in doing so. We should also note here that the threat perception we portray to the people of the United States has also diminished over the past two years, another point in our favor.

Significant draw-down of forces will surely bring into question for Europeans the U.S. commitment to overall NATO defense, especially in the non-nuclear arena. And what will the German response be? I believe they will see a U.S. pullout as the death knell for NATO as we know it. Natural movement would then be toward some form of European defense community which parallels their economic union. Here too they face major difficulties. Since the FRG is the strongest NATO nation outside the USA, she would likely have to bear the largest cost share of such an undertaking. I do not believe she will be willing to do

so. Even now there is political pressure in the nation to maintain or reduce military spending, not increase it. In addition, current demographics indicate that the Federal Republic is facing a diminishing manpower pool of military age youth for the foreseeable future.²⁴ Every young German put in uniform is one diverted from economic development. Germany will choose to support the economy rather than increase her military costs. The population will insist on this. Given the present perception of the threat we pose as discussed earlier, she will conclude that if the Americans believe the threat is sufficiently reduced to permit U.S. withdrawal, she too should not be so worried as to have to increase the size of her forces.

At this specific point we must be ready with our well-conceived proposal, one that will surprise, astonish, and give us the total initiative. Properly handled this action may achieve for us numerous goals at the same time. If it appears that the West Germans are unwilling to spend more on defense as would be required in a European defense community, there are very limited options open to them. Even with their reduced threat perception, they do not honestly believe they can ensure their security without the presence of U.S. forces in the present environment given the current size and organization of the Bundeswehr. Once the United States' military presence is withdrawn or even significantly reduced, the FRG must choose one of four options: join us, accept the risk associated with security guaranteed by their current force structure, choose to become the leader of an European defense community or opt for neutrality.

Realistically the first holds no attraction for them, at least for the immediate future. As indicated above, I doubt their willingness to opt for accepting the risk associated with the military status quo or to become the pillar of an all European army when another option may well present more advantage. Neutrality has worked for other countries on Germany's borders and would give her the opportunity to reallocate resources including scarce manpower from military uses to others deemed more important. Here we can use the Germans' reduced perception of our threat to nudge them toward a weak rather than strong neutrality, the only type of change that will allow them to effect this resource reallocation.

When these circumstances occur or we are able to orchestrate them, the real carrot to entice consideration of neutrality will be brought into play, an offer for our support in an effort to achieve resolution of the German question, reunification. Our offer should be realistic in its concept and must include our willingness to help provide a guarantee of their neutrality. The West Germans will be able to view this offer as an opportunity to achieve what has been a long term goal for them, one that in itself seemed an impossible dream. We will promote reunification as an added incentive for a political maneuver already in their best interest, neutrality. Under these circumstances we stand to gain a number of advantages. It may seem incongruous to say that giving up one of our premier satellite states, the GDR, can benefit us, but let me review some of the possibilities.

First and foremost is increased security for our nation. Dissolution of NATO as we know it would constitute a major coup for us. The primary change will occur as U.S. forces depart under the

pressure of changing threat perceptions and anti-military sentiment in West Germany as well as from the need for the American government to aggressively pursue resolution of its budget deficit. A significant portion of that resolution will surely have to come from defense expenditures because the population is not likely to accept social program reductions of the magnitude required to succeed. Forces withdrawn from overseas theaters by the Americans must be realistically dropped from their force structure. Otherwise, they would save nothing since it will cost as much, if not more, to maintain the same forces in the United States as in Europe. This has a secondary positive effect for us as well, since fewer forces in the American force structure will give us the opportunity to reduce our own to an extent and turn those resources to other economic development. (NOTE: As part of the upcoming conventional force reduction process we will use this reduction as a negotiating point. In doing so we will achieve a goal of our own, create good will and get more than we might otherwise for a concession we wish to make anyhow.) Departure of U.S. troops is sure to fire doubt about her commitment to the Alliance and lead to its eventual downfall. Facing economic pressures, anti-military feelings and a diminishing manpower pool, the FRG will not be willing to be the central figure of a wholly European alliance. Without West Germany or the presence of significant U.S. troop strength, there is no NATO.

Second, a neutral, reunified Germany could in fact provide for us an added element of security. Historically, the Motherland has time after time been subjected to invasion from the west. Currently we have one complete buffer zone of allied states on our western boundary

consisting of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. A neutral German state would complete a second buffer zone of neutral and eastern aligned states, i.e. Finland, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Yugoslavia and Albania, with the minor exception of Turkey. With buffers of neutral and allied states, a defunct NATO and a reduced U.S. force structure we are more secure than now when we deal with daily confrontation. Withdrawal of our own troops from the GDR will allow us to execute our own force reductions and still have sufficient forces available to ensure the stability of the Warsaw Pact alliance. Properly managed, troop draw-downs, the reduced perception of the threat we present to Western Europe, our positive participation as a leader in settling die Deutsche Frage and the restructuring of Europe to our advantage can actually be made a part of the glasnost program and we will be the prime beneficiaries.

Earlier I stated that in the world of the future the superpowers will compete economically rather than as before with armies on great fields of battle. The risk of nuclear devastation is too great to do otherwise. In order for us to compete we must begin to develop our own economy successfully. To do so we require a continuous flow of the modern technology currently in use and under development in the West. We have the natural resources and population to advance but lack the technical expertise and hardware. Germany is geographically located between East and West and has historically had a foot in both cultures and both economies. A neutral German state will be willing
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to, in fact need to, trade with both. As a neutral they cannot be so pressured as they are now to refrain from trading technology to us in exchange for the resources they need to maintain their own economy.

The Germans have their own technology base and are so important, so strong economically that they will continue to be a major trader in the West and have access to the latest technologies. There seems to me no other way for us to successfully gain the technologic impetus to make ourselves economically competitive.

We must also recognize that purely historical and nationalist sentiment will not be sufficient to prompt the FRG to make the move to neutrality as we are contemplating. It must also be economically feasible so that it has a broad base of appeal to the population and government. There are opinions in West Germany which hold that reunification would be costly at first but the long run result would be increased prosperity. They assume, as do I, that the government and social systems of a neutral Germany would approach those of the Federal Republic more so than those of the GDR. While the initial costs of supporting increases in social systems to reach an additional 17 million people will be significant, they can be offset by the long term gains available in increased markets and production potential from the additional land and work force. There is some reason to believe that the possibility of reunification would be viewed as an economic boon opportunity by German leaders, both political and industrial.²⁷ The lag time generated by the costs associated with expansion of Germany's social programs might reach 10 years and would provide us the chance to develop our own economy and prepare to share as a trading partner in the opportunities created when their economic potential is realized.

I am not foolish enough to believe that reunification might occur without significant problems and difficulties. The question to be

answered is whether or not the gains we might make from such an outcome outweigh the political and economic costs involved. It is necessary now to review these possibilities.

To begin with, there is no doubt that some resistance will come from the government of the GDR. They see themselves as a separate nation and a bastion of communism. This is not so true of the population at large, however. Given the opportunity to choose, they will likely opt for reunification and an opportunity to attempt to reach the standards of living now enjoyed in the FRG. Honecker²⁸ himself has been consistently more open in contacts and concepts with Kohl and the relationship is likely to continue to grow as a natural reaction to the progress of our own program of glasnost. Much of the contact between East and West Germany has been predicated on gaining positive cash flow for the GDR to improve its economic position. Reunification appears to be the ultimate method to do so. Realistic evaluation by the government of East Germany will no doubt show that to be true and will recognize it as a favorable situation for her people. This will be particularly visible as current trade programs between the two Germanies bring more and more western affluence to the East. I believe that we can effect participation by our ally in negotiations to achieve an acceptable program for reunification. In so doing we will be supporting the long awaited realignment of Europe as an example of glasnost, but a realignment in which we are the leaders and which will serve to benefit us in the long run. If I am correct and the world of the future will compete largely on an economic basis, it is essential that we be able to develop our own economy and cultivate a trading partner from whom we can obtain the

required technology to succeed, one with a foot in both Eastern and Western camps as a neutral unified Germany would be.

A major concern for us will be the effect of East Germany, a long time stalwart in our alliance, being given the freedom, the opportunity to reunite with West Germany into a single nation. Specifically, we must concern ourselves with the impact such an outcome will have on other members of the Warsaw Pact. While there may be some unrest, I believe there are three major points which stand to make the change manageable. First, no other nation in Europe emerged from the Great Patriotic War as a divided nation the way Germany did. A move to reshape Europe and reunify the German states can be justified as meeting the demands of history and will appear to be a normal part of glasnost for the world. Second, a neutral, militarily weaker Germany will also be a buffer for our allies between them and the West, as well as for us. (While we will likely make force reductions in the troops withdrawn from the GDR, some would still be available, along with our units already stationed there, to quell major disturbances in the satellite countries if they occur.) Last, and maybe most importantly, our friends also stand to benefit from the economic opportunities to be realized in contact with a major trading nation having inroads to both East and West as discussed earlier for a reunified Germany. There is not a single member of COMECON which would not benefit from and be in favor of obtaining advanced technology from the West, thereby sharing in the opportunities that represents.

WESTERN REACTION

The last major consideration is the reaction of West Germany's NATO allies to reunification. If we manage the circumstances and timing correctly, their reactions may have no effective bearing at all. We must face the fact, however, that the reactions could in fact be an impediment to such a plan on our part. What are the reactions likely to be and how can they be overcome?

Most unpredictable of all is the United States. Officially their foreign policy supports eventual reunification, but we are not certain the policy would be followed. Their assumption that we would never permit such an occurrence has allowed them to dodge the question over the last thirty years. I believe they are totally unprepared to deal with a scenario such as described in this memorandum. The fact that we are not only permitting but orchestrating the event will achieve total surprise and ensure for us the high ground, placing them completely on the defensive. Remember that the U.S. is the strongest member of NATO and its most consistent in terms of military support, but is under significant budget and popular pressure to reconsider that commitment. Recall too my earlier reference to the speech by former ambassador Killick which defined the long term purpose of NATO as achieving a modus vivendi in Europe, an impossibility without resolution of the German question. With its strongest member on the defensive, confused by and having to react to our initiative, and us on the offensive orchestrating what has long been the professed goal of their alliance (for our eventual benefit), we are bound to generate

a level of confusion and disruption among the Western allies which should increase the chances for success of our plan.

The other NATO allies of major import are France, Britain and the Benelux countries because proximity and history give them the greatest interest. Their concerns will be for the effect a resurgent, unified Germany will have on their nations. They remember, as do we, all too well 1914 and 1940. Here we must be particularly careful to ensure they understand that militarily weak neutrality is a condition for reunification. Recognize that, for the Germans' edification, I am not talking disarmament, only reduced strength neutrality, reduced enough so as not to be an offensive threat to any neighbor. Recall my indication that we would be willing to guarantee German neutrality. This can be a double edged sword to protect not only the Germans but their neighbors as well.

The members of the European Economic Community (EEC) might also dispose themselves to enact economic sanctions to prevent a move toward reunification by East and West Germany. While this will surely be considered, I believe it is not a realistic possibility. Reciprocal actions by the German government would be as harmful to them as would their proposed sanctions to the Germans. They will refrain from such self-defeating actions. They recognize all too well that Germany is the strongest member of the community economically and that the EEC cannot survive well without her. In addition, they will want to avoid driving Germany eastward. Further evaluation will identify the economic potential for them as well as for Germany in a reunified nation with greater economic potential and an opening to the East as a future market.

CONCLUSION

So in the final analysis, I believe that an answer to the German question, i.e. reunification, may be achievable and may be worked to our benefit. Whether it can actually be done or not is dependent on significant variables and no one can predict with certainty the turns of human events. It does, however, unquestionably bear investigation as a future foreign policy strategum. It may take twenty years or more, but what is so little time in the life of a nation? Although there are inevitable costs, I believe they are manageable. I see potential benefit to the security of our nation, i.e. disruption of NATO and establishment of a neutral buffer to the west of our Warsaw Pact allies; the opportunity to safely negotiate force structure reductions and turn those assets to economic development; availability of western technology to aid in that economic development; world political leadership with us on the offensive; and improvement in the lives of our people. The ultimate preservation and safety of our country is paramount. We must be willing to investigate every avenue and be prepared to orchestrate actions which will ensure our success. Therefore you must give this proposal due consideration.

GORBACHEV

General Secretary

EPILOGUE

This paper lays out one of many scenarios which could be part of our future. The interviews and research conducted led me to conclude that it is not so far from the realm of the possible as some might believe or wish to believe. The real point to be made is that the scenario is not implausible and all indications are that the United States is far from prepared to deal with such a surprise initiative by the Soviets. My interviews at the State Department indicated that the Department does not even have an active file on German reunification. Our policy has "evolved" to support for reunification in the form of self-determination for the German people, which essentially means that we have not been forced to take a stand behind a specific position. A scenario similar to the one proposed could well meet Soviet needs for increased security, economic development assistance and destabilization or elimination of NATO as an opposition force. Given the number of relative surprises already initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev, we must be aware of and prepare for proposals he may make, or resign ourselves to remaining on the diplomatic defense and suffering the commensurate shift in the world balance of power which could occur if such a scenario were to come to pass.

ENDNOTES

1. Soviet defense spending constitutes an estimated 15 percent of GNP and 44.4 percent of the national budget. Press and Information Office of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, Facts and Figures: A Comparison of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, p. 27.
2. Helmut Dietmar Starke, Charles Calvert Bayley, and Theodore S. Hamerow, "History of Germany," Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia, 1981, Vol. 8, pp. 98-125.
3. United States Department of State, "Protocol of Proceedings of the Crimea (Yalta) Conference, February 11, 1945 [Extracts]," in Documents on Germany 1944-1985, pp. 10-11.
4. United States, Department of State, "Protocol of the Proceedings of the Berlin (Potsdam) Conference, August 1, 1945 [Extracts]," in Documents on Germany 1944-1985, pp. 54-65.
5. United States Department of State, "Note from the Soviet Union to the United States Protesting the Formation of a Separate Government for the Western Zones of Germany, October 1, 1949," in Documents on Germany 1944-1985, pp. 274-78.
6. Stalin supported reunification from Potsdam through 1952 as a mechanism to gain influence in Western Europe. It was downplayed after the 17 June 1953 uprising in East Berlin. For further information see E. W. Schnitzer, German Studies: Soviet Policy on the Reunification of Germany 1945-1952, Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 15 July 1953, 12-17; Michael Sturmer, "The Evolution of the Contemporary German Question" and Gerhard Wettig, "The Soviet View," in Germany Between East and West, Ed. Edwina Moreton, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
7. Schnitzer, p. 18.
8. Stanley R. Sloan, The German Question Forty Years After Yalta, Report Prepared for the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, pp. 4-5.
9. West Germany, German Information Center, Focus on the Relations Between the Two States in Germany, pp. 7-8.
10. The CDU began to pursue its own version of Ostpolitik in 1983.
11. Sloan, pp. 10-12.
12. Sir John Killick, "Europeans Have Their View of Gorbachev Impact," ROA National Security Report, December, 1988, pp. 5-6.

13. David Gergen, "NATO in Disarray? This Time Reality," US News and World Report, 23 January 1989, p. 26.
14. American Embassy Bonn Message, Date/Time Group 311639Z Aug 87, Subject: Gorbachev Beats Reagan in FRG Opinion Poll. In an opinion poll conducted for Der Spiegel by the German EMNID Polling Institute on 31 August 1987, Gorbachev rated 1.7; President Reagan, 0.4; Prime Minister Thatcher, 0.5; and President Mitterand, 1.5 on a scale from -5 to +5. Chancellor Kohl received a rating of 0.2 on a similar poll conducted in mid-1985.
15. In a Research Memorandum from the US Information Agency titled "West European Publics Counsel Caution in Responding to the Gorbachev United Nations Speech, Yet Confidence in the Soviet Union Continues to Rise", dated December 20, 1988, a telephone survey showed West German popular confidence in the Soviet Union at 83 percent, up from 47 percent in June 1988.
16. "More Units to Receive Apache Helicopters Next Year; Local Opposition in Germany Hinders Deployment," Aviation Week and Space Technology, 12 December 1988, p. 109.
17. Keith F. Mordorff, "German Air Show Crash Increases Pressure to Limit Low-Altitude Flights," Aviation Week and Space Technology, 5 September 1988, pp. 36-7.
18. Robert J. McCartney, "U.S. Fighter Crash in W. Germany Kills 5," Washington Post, 9 December 1988, p. A1.
19. Hans Rattinger, "Development and Structure of West German Public Opinion on Security Issues in the 1980s," Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the International Security Studies Section, International Studies Association. Rosslyn, Virginia, November 3-5, 1988, p. 8.
20. EMNID Polling Institute conducts the West German equivalent of the United States' Gallup polls.
21. Robin Knight, "A New German Nationalism in the Age of Gorbachev," U.S. News and World Report, 23 January 1989, pp. 26-27.
22. Opinion polls in West Germany show a rise in the percent of the population willing to accept neutrality as a condition for reunification from approximately 33 percent in 1978 to 67 percent in 1984. (Jonathan Dean, "Directions in Inner-German Relations," Orbis, Fall 1985, pp. 19-20.) This trend is significant not only for the size and pace of the increase but for the fact that it had so much momentum even prior to the arrival on the scene of Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev.
23. C. Fred Bergsten, "Debtor America and the Budget Deficit," USA Today (Periodical), July 1988, pp. 16-20.

24. Christoph Bertram, "Europe's Security Dilemmas," Foreign Affairs, Summer 1987, p. 955.

25. Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Defense Annual Report to Congress, Fiscal Year 1984, pp. 186-190.

26. The Federal Republic currently conducts 75.9 percent of its trade with European Economic Community members and other western industrial nations, including the U.S. and Canada, and only 4.5 percent with COMECON. The GDR, on the other hand, conducts 28.5 percent of its trade with western industrial countries but 63.4 percent with COMECON. In a reunified nation trade would have to be maintained with both East and West to preclude significant negative impact on the economy. (West Germany, Federal Ministry for Intra-German Relations, Facts and Figures: A Comparative Study of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. Kassel, West Germany: Press and Information Office of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, translation published on the basis of the third revised edition, September, 1985.)

27. Interview with Wolf Calebow, Political Consul, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Washington, D.C., 2 December 1988.

28. Dean, 622.

29. William E. Griffith, "The American View," in Germany Between East and West, Ed. Edwina Moreton, pp. 61-62.

30. Sloan, p. 24.

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